

Madison County Board of Health
Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2020

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On Thursday, March 12, 2020, a meeting of the Madison County Board of Health came to order at 4:37 p.m. in Public Meeting Room of the Madison County Administration Building, located at 103 West Wallace, in Virginia City, Montana.

Board Members in attendance were, Douglas B. Young D.V.M, Melinda Tichenor- MVMC Lab Director and Whitney Marsh – RN Ennis Schools. Also in attendance were, Melissa Brummell – MCPHD Director, Jennifer Martens - Public Health Clerk, Erin Montgomery – TPS, Tracy Christensen – PH RN, Kerry Pride – PHSD, Van Puckett – Sanitarian and Bonnie O'Neill - Chief Administrative Officer. Steve Primm – public via conference call.

Melissa Brummell, RN, Director:

New Staff Introductions:

Melissa Brummell introduced Erin Montgomery and Tracy Christensen as the new staff members to the Public Health Department. Erin is the new Tobacco Prevention Specialist for Beaverhead and Madison County and Tracy is the part time RN.

Written office update:

Nothing at this time

Coronavirus COVID - 19:

Melissa would like the board's recommendations regarding county care facilities. President Trump recommended no visitors for nursing homes. Steve McNeece the acting nursing home administrator would like recommendations on how to protect the care centers in our county. Melissa spoke with Dr. Molly Biehl, Dr. Mara Davenport and Dr. Roman Hendrickson and they recommend stopping visitors once we have our 1st confirmed case on Montana soil. The restriction of visitors will not include end of life residents. Currently the care centers have no restrictions for visitation. Bonnie O'Neill informed the board that the care centers are considering restricting door access and only allowing one door closest to the nurse's station for people to enter and leaving the remaining doors as exit only. Steve McNeece has drafted a letter for the resident families regarding possible visitor restriction. Melissa read the draft to the board and Melinda recommended we change some wording. The board recommends all visitors and staff wash/sanitize prior to entering the facility and keeping contact within the residents room to reduce contact with others. Also once a positive case occurs in Montana the board recommends the no visitor policy. Doug Young made the motion to give the recommendations to the care centers of mandatory no visitors once we have our first COVID-19 case on Montana soil. Whitney Marsh seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously. It can be enforced by law enforcement per Sheriff Fortner as trespassing.

COVID-19 Community Forum will be held in Alder Saturday March 14, 2020 at the Alder Fire Hall. We will record this forum and post it on YouTube for residents that are unable to attend.

There will be a countywide community forum on Saturday March 21, 2020 in Harrison, Ennis, Virginia City, Sheridan and Twin Bridges. The times will be posted online and at various locations on a flyer throughout the county. We will be following social distancing guidelines during these forums.

Joe and Melissa Brummell went to Big Sky Resort to educate regarding COVID-19 on how to handle visitors and touch base with the hospitals and urgent care centers. Due to

the county lines in that area we need to work closely with Bozeman/Big Sky on where the visitors are staying to know which county should do follow up. These facilities have a high risk due to international travelers. Melissa asked if they would consider coming to the resort for COVID-19 testing to eliminate exposure to the general public since most visitors would use some form of public transportation to get to the medical facilities. The medical facilities are not interested at this time to engage in that activity. The Big Sky Resort is fine with housing quarantined visitors in separate housing from the hotel. Melissa will start joining the Gallatin weekly calls.

Doug would like to know if the state has a facility in mind to house visitors to the State of Montana that need to be quarantined. Melissa will reach out to the State Health Department. She also informed the board that dependent upon where the visitors are staying during their vacation determines which county is responsible for them during quarantine.

Big Sky Resort would also like the board's recommendation regarding buffet style food service. The board and the sanitarian recommend the buffet style dining would be fine to continue if there is a server that can distribute the food to the guests. They would prefer to see all self-service cancelled at this time.

Doug had a few questions from first responders:

1. If their child is diagnosed as a positive COVID-19 case does the entire family have to quarantine? Melissa said there are no rules in place as of yet but it is highly recommended.
2. Some are self-employed and if they have to be quarantined will they be compensated for lost wages? Melissa said that President Trump announced a small business loan program to keep businesses afloat. She recommended they look into that program.

As of now Madison County has 0 active cases of COVID -19.

Van Puckett, Sanitarian:

Sanitarian in Training:

The new sanitarian in training Joe Lazarus, will be starting next week part time.

Van has a co-op agreement with State DPHHS that needs to be signed. Melinda Tichenor made the motion to approve the co-op agreement as written. Whitney Marsh seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

Van also stated that we will have assistance available from Beaverhead, Gallatin, Jefferson, Broadwater counties and State of Montana if requested. He will gather email addresses and phone numbers for the board to have for reference.

Sheridan Composting site:

Steve Primm – Conservation Director attended via phone

Steve is working with the Ruby Valley Conservation District to develop a livestock carcass composting program/site for the Ruby watershed. Town of Sheridan has offered up a site approximately 2 miles southeast of town. He is in need of a signature from the county health officer in order to obtain the Montana Department Environmental Quality (DEQ) permit for composting. The site would be inspect able by the State of Montana and the Sanitarian Department. There was a similar site installed in Norris last fall. RD Marks signed off on that permit per Steve Primm. Doug does not recall that going before the Board of Health for review. He requested to see a copy of that. Steve will obtain a copy for the board to review at the next quarterly meeting. Doug Young expressed concern over CWD (chronic wasting disease), possible risk of animal to human transmission and contamination throughout the county during transport. He would like further scientific

discovery, detailed agenda and testing by DEQ before signing any documentation. DEQ is set to meet in April. Doug reminded all that the board's job is to protect the public health and safety in Madison County. Doug Young made the motion to table the Department Environmental Quality permit for further scientific discovery, establishment and oversight of daily operations at existing and future sites, detailed agenda and testing information to make an informed decision. Melinda Tichenor seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

Jennifer Martens, Public Health Clerk:

Financial report

Erin Montgomery, Tobacco Prevention Specialist:

Written update

Communicable Disease Response Plan and Checklist:

Melissa presented the Checklist for Review & Approval of Communicable Disease Reporting Protocol(s) for signature. Whitney Marsh made the motion to accept the document as is. Doug Young seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

Whitney Marsh made the motion to approve the December 12, 2019 meeting minutes as written. Melinda Tichenor seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

Whitney Marsh made the motion to approve the special January 30, 2020 meeting minutes as written. Melinda Tichenor seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting date:

The next meeting TBD.

Meeting Adjourned:

A motion to adjourn was made by Melinda Tichenor at 6:20pm, Doug Young second the motion, all voted Aye, and the motion was passed unanimously.


Douglas B. Young, Chairman
Madison County Board of Health

Date Approved: April 9, 2020
Minutes prepared by:


Jennifer Martens, Public Health Clerk